

OFF BASE

The Antelope Valley is a grand expanse of blue skies and sunshine radiating in every direction from Edwards Air Force Base. To the south and west are majestic mountains and to the north and east, the undulating endlessness of the Mojave Desert.

ORIGIN and HISTORY

At some time in the unrecorded past, thousands of years ago, an area of some 2,400 square miles was dropped or depressed about 100 feet below the surface of a vast coastal plain. When underground movement jarred the plain upward, the sunken area rose and became what is now known as the Antelope Valley.

The Paiute Indians were the first known human inhabitants of the area. The first white visitors were most likely Spanish navy deserters, members of the Portola party traveling in the valley's vicinity in 1769. In pursuing these deserters, Lt. Pedro Fages, one of Spain's Catalonia volunteers, reached the southern end of the Antelope Valley in 1772. His diarist reports that Indians were seen lurking behind what were thought to be date palms, but were actually Joshua trees.

The year 1776 brought Father Francisco Garces and three Indian guides from the San Gabriel Mission. Garces recorded his views of the vast land that was then called El Tehon Rancheria, or the Badger Ranch, of the Cuabajoy Indians. In 1834, Kit Carson and Gen. John C. Fremont came through the valley and remained long enough to establish



Joshua trees are a common sight in the Antelope Valley. Courtesy photo

what is today known as Fort Tejon Road. Wildlife was so plentiful at that time that it was said three geese were killed with one shot at Lake Elizabeth. Grass and desert growth was luxuriant and pools of water stood in many places over the valley floor.

The first determined settlers chose the Lake Elizabeth region and the foothill of the Tehachapi Mountains. The general area became known as the Antelope Valley because of the immense herds of these animals. Yet, hunters and severe winters in the late 1800s decimated the herds.

The Southern Pacific Railroad, between San Francisco and Los Angeles, was completed in 1876 with the rails from Los Angeles having been placed as far inland as Soledad Canyon to the south of the valley. The frantic race between the two large opposing work forces ended with the ceremonial driving of the golden spike to join the rails and heralded the opening of the Antelope Valley to the outside world.

By 1890, the Antelope Valley was in a very prosperous condition, especially in the southern portion of Lancaster and Palmdale. Land seekers and settlers had come in large numbers. Many families with financial means settled in the eastern segment of the valley to begin raising grain and fruits and related agricultural products.



The Walmart Super Center located in prosperous present day Palmdale.
Photo by Thomas Powell

The year 1898 was a year of “firsts” for the valley. The previous year borax had been discovered in the United States, and in 1898 it was found that an immense deposit of borax lay beneath the desert landscape of the Antelope Valley. Within the same 12 months, gold was discovered in Rosamond. Men working the mines made their way across what was known then as Rodriguez Dry Lakebed, to and from work, on a V-shaped wagon rigged with sails.

The age of aviation came to the Antelope Valley in the 1930s when the Army Air Corps began training operations on the shores of the dry lakebed at the Muroc Bombing and Gunnery Range, now Edwards Air Force Base. During World War II, the dry lakebed “floated” a huge wooden battleship—the Muroc Maru—constructed to train bombardiers in the use of bombsites. Runways now bisect the lakebed.

Today the Antelope Valley has learned to successfully blend the traditional pursuits of business, commerce, industry, agriculture and mining with the technology of the aerospace frontier, while remaining a place where people prefer to live and visitors return time and time again. This high desert area is known for its contributions to the defense of the nation with its close proximity to existing Department of Defense facilities, including Edwards, Air Force Plant 42 and China Lake Naval Weapons Center.



An Edwards B-1 launches a Joint Air to Surface Standoff Missile at China Lake Naval Air Warfare Center Jan 16. Photo by Bobbi Garcia

VALLEY LOCATION

The Antelope Valley, one of many valleys in the Mojave Desert, is bordered by the San Gabriel Mountains to the south, the Tehachapi Mountains to the west, the greater Mojave Desert to the north and Victor Valley to the east. Rosamond, Mojave, California City, Boron and the greater part of Edwards lie in Kern County in the northern part of the valley. Lancaster, Palmdale, Quartz Hill, Littlerock and the southernmost sliver of Edwards lie in Los Angeles County in the southern and central part of the valley. The eastern part of the valley falls within San Bernardino County.



Photo by John Wilson

Annual Events

MARCH

Almond Blossom Festival Quartz Hill, Calif. (661) 722-4811

This unique local festival features a myriad of blooming almond trees on nearby Quartz Hill. The event also includes the Almond Festival parade, one of the oldest parades in the Antelope Valley. The event is held the second weekend in March.



Photo by Thomas Powell

APRIL

California Poppy Festival Lancaster City Park Lancaster, Calif., (661) 723-6077

Celebrating Lancaster's most colorful seasonal visitors, the California Poppy, this event offers continuous family entertainment, wildflower arts and photo contests, an arts and crafts bazaar, environmental booths and unique cuisine. The event is held every April, and in 2006 will be the weekend of April 22 & 23.

JUNE

Tehachapi Valley Arts Association Springtime Fair

Tehachapi Central Park

Tehachapi, Calif., (661) 822-4180

The two-day fair features arts, crafts, food booths, games and entertainment. The event is typically held the second weekend in June.

JULY

Fourth of July

Palmdale High School, Riewer Field
Palmdale, Calif., (661) 267-5611

Starlight Concerts in July, August and September

Marie Kerr Park
Palmdale, Calif., (661) 267-5611

AUGUST

Mountain Festival and Professional Rodeo Cowboy Association

Tehachapi Central Park and Rodeo Grounds

Tehachapi, Calif., (661) 822-4180

The biggest attraction for the year in Tehachapi is its Mountain Festival, coupled with the Rodeo. The festival and rodeo feature an arts and craft fair, more than 100 vendors, a pet parade, pancake breakfast, carnival and classic car show. The festival and rodeo are held the third weekend in August each year.

Antelope Valley Fair and Alfalfa Festival

2551 W. Ave. H

Lancaster, Calif., (661) 948-6060

<http://www.avfair.com>

This annual event is held at the newly constructed fairgrounds located at Ave. H and the Antelope Valley Freeway. The fair features concerts, carnival rides, livestock competition, bake-offs and children's shows. The fair is held each year in late August through early September.



Photo by Thomas Powell

SEPTEMBER

Aerospace Walk of Honor Celebration

Lancaster Blvd.

Lancaster, Calif., (661) 723-6053

<http://www.cityoflancasterca.org>

The ceremony attracts visitors to Lancaster Blvd. for the unveiling of granite monuments honoring Edwards' test pilots whose aviation careers are marked by significant flight test achievements. The annual event is held September 16, 2006, the Saturday before the Society of Experimental Test Pilots convention.

Annual Street Fair and Car Show

Quartz Hill, Calif., (661) 722-4811

Held the third Saturday in September. Information is available online at <http://www.quartzhillchamber.org>.

Fiddling Down the Tracks Fiddle Contest

Tehachapi Central Park

Tehachapi, Calif., (661) 822-4180

Contestants of all ages perform throughout the day. Food and craft booths are available. This is typically held the third weekend of September. Admission is free.

Rosamond Armed Forces Appreciation Day and Parade

Rosamond, Calif., (661) 256-3248

Downtown Rosamond celebrates and honors the armed forces with festivities that include a float parade and guest speakers. The event is on the fourth Saturday in September.

Tehachapi Valley Arts Association Fall Harvest Festival

Tehachapi Central Park

Tehachapi, Calif., (661) 822-4180

The two-day fair features arts, crafts, food booths, games and entertainment. The event is typically held the third weekend in September.

Valyermo Annual Fall Festival

St. Andrew's Abbey

Valyermo, Calif., (661) 944-2178

<http://www.valyermofallfestival.com>

Held each year during the weekend of the last Sunday in September, the festival features music, crafts and food on the shady grounds of the Abbey, home to an order of Benedictine monks. The event, which routinely draws 20,000 visitors annually, is free. However, there is a \$4 parking donation.

OCTOBER

Palmdale Fall Festival

Marie Kerr Park

Palmdale, Calif., (661) 267-5611

<http://www.cityofpalmdale.org>

This family celebration features crafts, fine arts, games and rides for children, live entertainment, international food booths and an aerospace exhibit. The event is held the second weekend in October each year.



Photo by Ray Felix

Attractions

Aerospace Walk of Honor Lancaster Blvd.

Lancaster, Calif., (661) 723-6053
<http://www.cityoflanasterca.org>

The Aerospace Walk of Honor hosts granite monuments honoring Edwards Air Force Base test pilots whose aviation careers are marked by significant flight test achievements.

Blackbird Airpark

25th St. E. and Rancho Vista Blvd. (Ave. P)
Palmdale, Calif., (661) 277-8050

The Air Force Flight Test Center Museum's Blackbird Airpark annex is the world's only display of a Lockheed SR-71A together with its Blackbird predecessor, the A-12, and the once ultra-secret D-21 drone. A Lockheed U-2D aircraft can also be seen at the airpark, along with a number of supporting exhibits including a restored crash fire truck, wind tunnel models, and jet engines. The park is open 11 a.m.-4 p.m., Friday, Saturday and Sunday. More information can be found at <http://www.flighttest.org>

Calico Ghost Town

Yermo, Calif., (800) TO-CALICO
<http://www.calicotown.com>

The Calico Ghost Town treats spectators to gunfight re-enactments, historical shops and mines. Camping facilities, as well as RV hookups, are available. It is open from 8 a.m. until dusk daily, with the shops open from 9 a.m.-5 p.m., daily except for Christmas.

Devil's Punchbowl

28000 Devil's Punchbowl Rd.
Pearblossom, Calif., (661) 944-2743
<http://www.devils-punchbowl.com>

Devil's Punchbowl is a 1,300-acre park with a system of hiking trails, including a one-mile loop down a 300-foot canyon. A visitor's center features an exhibit of native animals such as snakes, bobcats, coyotes, owls and other birds. Picnic facilities are available.

Exotic Feline Breeding Compound

Mojave-Tropical Rd.
Rosamond, Calif., (661) 256-3332
<http://www.cathouse-fcc.org>

Home to over 70 of the world's most endangered felines, the Exotic Feline Breeding Compound is a breeding zoo and research facility. The facility is a nonprofit organization and funds received are used for the care and support of the compound's animals and long-term goals, which include a natural history museum and public education programs. The compound is closed on Wednesdays and Christmas Day.

Kern River Whitewater Rafting

Lake Isabella, Calif., (866) KRV4FUN
<http://www.kernrivervalley.com>

The river is a favorite place for white-water rafting and holds tours May through September. Children under the age of 8 are not permitted. The area boasts camping fishing, hiking, windsurfing and skiing. The Web site offers a calendar of events.

Lake Isabella

Lake Isabella, Calif., (760) 379-5236,
or (866) KRV4FUN

Lake Isabella, created in 1953 when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dammed the Kern River, flourishes as a tourist center for fishing, boating, camping and picnicking. Boats for fishing or lake exploration may be rented at marinas along the shore. Detailed information is available at <http://www.kernrivervalley.com>.

Lancaster JetHawks Baseball

45116 Valley Central Way
Lancaster, Calif., (661) 726-5400
<http://www.jethawks.com>

The Lancaster JetHawks are the California League Class-A farm team for the Arizona Diamondbacks and provide baseball enthusiasts local entertainment at the Lancaster Municipal Stadium.

Lancaster Performing Arts Center

750 W. Lancaster Blvd.
Lancaster, Calif., (661) 723-5950
<http://www.lpac.org>

The center provides top-quality entertainment as well as symphonies, ballet troupes, holiday performances such as "The Nutcracker" and "A Christmas Carol" and musical performances of every kind, including jazz, classical, pop and more.

Los Angeles County Raceway

6850 E. Ave. T
Palmdale, Calif., (661) 533-2224
<http://www.lacr.net>

This quarter-mile drag strip, featuring National Hot Rod Association drag racing and the annual Palmdale meet, is open year round. Schedules and information can be found at the Web site.

Palmdale Plant 42 Heritage Airpark

2001 E. Ave. P
Palmdale, Calif., (661) 267-5115
<http://www.cityofpalmdale.org/airpark>

Visitors may view a collection of aircraft flown, tested, produced or modified at U.S. Air Force Plant 42. The first five-acre phase of the Airpark has nine planes on display, including an F-100 Super Sabre, an A-4 Skyhawk and a T-38 Talon.

Palmdale Playhouse

38334 10th St. E.
Palmdale, Calif., (661) 267-5685
<http://www.cityofpalmdale.org>

The Palmdale Playhouse features a 350-seat theatre and provides a wide variety of professional entertainment and community theatre in its season lineup including orchestras, choirs, drama, dance, an art gallery and visual and performing arts programs for the community.

Tehachapi Loop Tehachapi, Calif.

Railroad fans flock to the Tehachapi Loop where the spiraling Southern Pacific main line makes a 360-degree turn as it climbs from the valley to the mountains. More details may be found at <http://www.tehachapi.com>.

Twenty Mule Team Museum

26962 Twenty-Mule Team Rd.
Boron, Calif., (760) 762-5810

The Twenty Mule Team Museum offers extensive insights into the many different ways borax is used and how it is excavated from California's largest open-pit mine. The museum is open seven days a week, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; closed on major holidays.

Vernon P. Saxon Jr. Aero Space Museum

26922 Twenty-Mule Team Rd.
Boron, Calif., (760) 762-6600
<http://www.boronchamber.org/saxon.html>

Open daily, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., except for major holidays. The museum, known as the Northern Gateway to Aerospace Valley, was put together through a collaborative effort by Team Edwards, U.S. Borax, KJC Operating Company and Boron community volunteers. The museum is dedicated to collecting, interpreting, preserving and displaying aeronautical and aerospace memorabilia from experimental flight research performed over the skies of Boron and the surrounding Antelope Valley.

Willow Springs International Motor Sports Park

3500 75th St. W.
Rosamond, Calif., (661) 256-2471
The raceway hosts a 600-acre complex of six racetracks embracing nearly every conceivable motor sports discipline. Schedules and more information may be found at <http://www.willowspringsraceway.com>.

Wind Turbines

Tehachapi Mountains

Tehachapi, Calif., (661) 822-4180
The Tehachapi area is the world's largest producer of wind-generated electricity and hosts a mountainside of turbines. A wind turbine captures the energy of the wind to drive a generator. As the generator turns, it produces electricity. More information is available online at <http://www.tehachapi.com/wind>.

COMMUNITY PROFILES

Boron, Calif.

Population: 3,600

Miles from Air Force Flight Test Center Headquarters Building: 23

Elected official: Chamber of Commerce president, F.O. Roe

School system: Muroc Unified School District, (661) 258-4178

Chamber of Commerce: 26962 Twenty-Mule Team Rd., Boron, Calif., 93516, (760) 762-5810

Web address: <http://www.boronchamber.org>

Located northeast of Edwards along California State Hwy. 58, the community of Boron is the site of a giant open-pit mine from which the extracted element, borax, lends the town its name. The pit, the largest in the Western Hemisphere, is owned and operated by the U.S. Borax and Chemical Corporation and employs a great deal of the community. Edwards employs the remainder. The town is also home of the Col. Vernon P. Saxon Jr. Aerospace Museum.

The town's people tuck themselves into the preservation of the rich history of both Boron and Edwards. Kern County provides the community's branch library, fire station and sheriff's department. The U.S. Post Office is centrally located on Boron Ave.

California City, Calif.

Population: 11,500

Miles from Air Force Flight Test Center Headquarters Building: 17

Elected official: Mayor Larry Adams

School system: Mojave Unified School District, (661) 824-4001

Chamber of Commerce: 8001 California City Blvd., California City, Calif., 93505, (760) 373-8676

Web address: <http://www.californiacity-ca.us>

Begun as a private commercial development, the community was incorporated in 1965 and ranks as the third largest incorporated city in terms of land area in California. Located northwest of the base along Hwy. 58 and a northern jaunt on California City Blvd., the small community offers all the enhancements of the original developer's grand vision: easy shopping, an 18-hole golf course and a central park offering swimming, boating, fishing, illuminated tennis courts, basketball and volleyball courts, picnic facilities, barbecue pits, children's playgrounds and a marina facility.

Lancaster, Calif.

Population: 133,000

Miles from Air Force Flight Test Center Headquarters Building: 29

Elected official: Mayor Frank Roberts

School system: Antelope Valley Union High School District, (661) 948-7655; Eastside Union School District, (661) 946-2813; Lancaster School District, (661) 948-4661; Westside Union School District, (661) 948-2669

Chamber of Commerce: 554 W. Lancaster Blvd., Lancaster, Calif., 93534, (661) 948-4518

Web address: <http://www.cityoflancasterca.org>

A thriving, civic-spirited community, Lancaster has enjoyed unprecedented growth and prosperity in the last decade. During this time, Lancaster has grown to be the commercial and business center of the Antelope Valley and promises to continue such growth.



Lancaster Blvd., outside of the Performing Arts Center. Photo by Thomas Powell

With proximity to the Los Angeles metropolitan area and yet clean air and blue skies, the community is an affordable choice conveniently located to much of Southern California's attractions and aerospace industry employment. Lancaster has a council-manager/administer form of government with five elected council members and 230 full-time employees. All public safety services, including police and fire, are provided by the County of Los Angeles, while the sheriff's department performs contract-based services, and the fire department performs under a Fire Protection District approach.

Mojave, Calif.

Population: 3,863

Miles from Air Force Flight Test Center Headquarters Building: 35

Elected official: Unincorporated

School system: Mojave Unified School District, (661) 824-4001

Chamber of Commerce: (661) 824-2481, or call Kern Economic Development Corporation at (661) 862-5150

Web address: <http://www.mojave.ca.us>

Mojave sits at the junction of California Highways 14 and 58 and to some is a gateway to such popular spots as Mammoth and the Eastern Sierras, Las Vegas, Eastern Mojave Desert and to the Los Angeles Basin. But Mojave itself is the location of several natural wonders and historical sites that include mining ghost towns and more.

Anyone driving through Mojave is certain to notice the Mojave Airport. Known to many as the civilian flight test center and the launching spot of SpaceShipOne, the airport is unique in its locale and environmental conditions and is known both for its flight test activities and for the maintenance and storage services provided to the airline industry.

CHURCHES

Nearly all faiths and denominations are represented in the Antelope Valley area. Local chambers of commerce listed on the following pages can provide detailed information.

North Edwards, Calif.

Population: 1,227

Miles from Air Force Flight Test Center Headquarters Building: 9

Elected official: none

School system: Muroc Joint Unified School District, (661) 258-4001

Chamber of Commerce: none

Web address: none

North Edwards is an unincorporated bedroom community just north of Edwards along Hwy. 58. School-age children go to school at Edwards. Housing is affordable, though shopping convenience is limited.

Palmdale, Calif.

Population: 136,734

Miles from Air Force Flight Test Center Headquarters Building: 39

Elected official: Mayor James Ledford Jr.

School systems: Antelope Valley Union High School District (high schools), (661) 948-7655; Palmdale School District (elementary and junior high schools), (661) 947-7191; Westside Union School District (elementary and junior high schools), (661) 948-2669

Chamber of Commerce: 817 E. Ave. Q-9, Palmdale, Calif., 93550, (661) 273-3232

Web address: <http://www.cityofpalmdale.org>

Palmdale's biggest industry and employer is aerospace. Thousands of residents are employed at Air Force Plant 42 Production Flight Test Installation and Edwards Air Force Base. Plant 42 is a huge complex including more than eight million square feet of covered space. Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co., Northrop Grumman and The Boeing Co. have billions of dollars in aerospace projects there. Producers, manufacturers, wholesalers, government and business services comprise 76 percent of the city's employment force. Natural resources also provide employment in the fields of sand, gravel, rock and cement production. The film industry finds Palmdale's high desert locations very attractive and spends millions of dollars here annually.

A community of 136,734 residents, Palmdale has a civic foundation in the Larry Chimbole Cultural Center, Palmdale Playhouse and Poncitlan Square, a park fashioned after one in Poncitlan, Mexico, Palmdale's sister city.

Quartz Hill, Calif.

Population: 10,000

Miles from Air Force Flight Test Center Headquarters Building: 35

Elected officials: none

School system: Westside School District, (661) 722-0716

Chamber of Commerce: 42043 50th St. W., Quartz Hill, Calif., 93536, (661) 722-4811

Web address: <http://www.quartzhillchamber.org>

Quartz Hill, a small, primarily residential, unincorporated community, is situated just four-and-a-half square miles west of Lancaster and Palmdale. Residents enjoy the rustic qualities of the town with horseback riding on many trails, fishing in the nearby California Aqueduct and a view of nature. The community is known for its almond orchards and the annual almond festival parade.

Rosamond, Calif.

Population: 18,500

Miles from Air Force Flight Test Center Headquarters Building: 19

Elected official: Mayor Jed Dyke

School system: Southern Kern Unified School District, (661) 256-5000

Chamber of Commerce: 2861 Diamond St., Rosamond, Calif., 94560, (661) 256-3248

Web address: <http://www.avchambers.com>

Just a straight shot west of Edwards along Rosamond Boulevard, the small community of Rosamond is a mecca for rock-hounds with its cradling and abundant hillside landscape of beautiful rocks – especially at Gem Hill, located four miles north of the community.

Kern County provides fire and police protection in addition to supporting a community recreation building and three parks with a lighted baseball diamond. Agriculture pertinent to the area includes alfalfa, sugar beets, potatoes and onions. The community also has a community/senior center. The community is the home of Willow Springs Raceway and the Exotic Feline Breeding Compound.

Tehachapi, Calif.

Population: 32,643

Miles from Air Force Flight Test Center Headquarters Building: 45

Elected official: Mayor Mariana Teel

School system: Tehachapi Unified School District, (661) 822-2100

Chamber of Commerce: P.O. Box 401, Tehachapi, Calif., 93581, (661) 822-4180

Web address: <http://www.tehachapicityhall.com>

Located in the mountains about 45 miles from the base and about 4,000 feet above sea level, Tehachapi offers a cool alternative to the warm Mojave Desert summers.

Tehachapi has a rural atmosphere with farming as a way of life for many residents. Award-winning livestock are common in the area as well as famous apples, pears and cherries.

Area residents visit Tehachapi year round for the Mountain Festival, the Professional Rodeo Cowboy Association rodeo in August, the apple and pumpkin harvest in the fall and the cool mountain breezes in the summer.

Victorville, Calif.

Population: 77,881

Miles from Air Force Flight Test Center Headquarters Building: 55

Elected official: Mayor Terry Caldwell

School system: Victor Valley Union High School District, (760) 955-3200; Victor Elementary School District, (760) 245-1691

Chamber of Commerce: P.O. Box 997, Victorville, Calif., 92392, (760) 245-6506

Web address: <http://www.vvchamber.com>

Located to the east of Edwards in the high desert of Victor Valley, Victorville is accessible via interstates 15 and 395, conveniently linking the city with all other areas of Southern California.

The community encompasses approximately 68 square miles and has experienced an annual growth in population of nearly 19 percent.

COLLEGES

Antelope Valley College

3041 W. Ave. K
Lancaster, Calif., (661) 722-6300
<http://www.avc.edu>

Antelope Valley College offers a diverse selection of two-year academic and vocational programs.



Antelope Valley College campus. Photo by Thomas Powell

California State University Bakersfield

Antelope Valley Campus
43909 30th St. W.
Lancaster, Calif., (661) 952-5000
<http://www.calstate.edu>

Cal State University Bakersfield offers a variety of classes here in the Antelope Valley.

Chapman University

140 Methusa Ave.
Edwards AFB, Calif., (661) 258-5251
40015 Sierra Hwy.
Palmdale, Calif., (661) 267-2001

Chapman University offers Bachelor's and Master's Degrees, teaching credentials, evening classes and accelerated programs.

HOSPITALS

Antelope Valley Hospital

1600 W. Ave. J
Lancaster, Calif., (661) 949-5000

Lancaster Community Hospital

43830 10th St. W.
Lancaster, Calif., (661) 948-4781

MUSEUMS

Antelope Valley Indian Museum

15701 E. Ave. M.
Lancaster, Calif., (661) 942-0662
<http://www.avim.av.org>

Originally built as a private home, the museum is built into and around the rocks of Paiute Butte in the Mojave Desert. The museum highlights the valley's Indian culture.

Lancaster Museum/Art Gallery

44801 Sierra Hwy.
Lancaster, Calif., (661) 948-1322

The museum and gallery feature a variety of local, regional and international art and historic exhibits. The gallery hosts a rotating exhibit, an all-media art exhibition and a student art exhibition.

Twenty Mule Team Museum

26962 Twenty-Mule Team Rd.
Boron, Calif., (760) 762-5810
<http://www.20muleteammuseum.org>

The museum embraces both the history of aerospace as forged at Edwards and the history of the famous Borax Twenty Mule Team days – all in a renovated house that used to be near a borax mine campsite.



Photo by Thomas Powell

Western Hotel Museum

557 W. Lancaster Blvd.
Lancaster, Calif., (661) 723-6260
<http://www.cityoflancasterca.org>

Lancaster's oldest structure displays Antelope Valley artifacts. Still visible on a sidewalk behind the museum are the footprints of a young Frances Gumm, better known as Judy Garland, from the days of her childhood in Lancaster.

PARKS and RECREATION

Lancaster National Soccer Center

43000 30th St. E.
Lancaster, Calif., (661) 723-6098
<http://www.lancastersoccercenter.com>

This 160-acre complex with 34 fields attracts regional and national tournaments, in addition to serving local youth and adult soccer teams.

Lancaster City Park and Big 8 Softball Complex

43011 N. 10th St. W.
Lancaster, Calif., (661) 723-6276
<http://www.big8softball.com>

One of the largest of all softball complexes in California, the Big 8 is known as the "Softball Tournament Destination Location."

Saddleback Butte State Park

Ave. J and 170th St. E.
Lancaster, Calif., (661) 942-0662
http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=618

Saddleback Butte, elevation 3,651 feet, is a granite mountain top that stands some thousand feet above the broad alluvial bottom land of the Antelope Valley about twenty miles east of Lancaster, on the western edge of the Mojave Desert. Activities include camping, exhibits, hiking trails and guided tours.

Red Rock Canyon State Park

California State Hwy. 14
Mojave, Calif., (661) 942-0662
http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=631

Located 23 miles northeast of Mojave, the park features spectacular red and gray sandstones that have eroded into a variety of shapes.



Sandstones of the Mojave. Photo by Photos.com



Photo by Thomas Powell

SHOPPING

Lancaster and Palmdale provide base personnel extensive shopping opportunities. Both feature virtually every national and regional retail store, making it unnecessary to travel outside the Antelope Valley for most goods and services.

Lancaster's main shopping area is located on Valley Central Way just off California State Hwy. 14 at exits for either avenue I or J, about 30 minutes from base housing. Palmdale's primary shopping area is anchored by the Antelope Valley Mall, the area's only covered shopping mall, located on W. Ave. P, just off the California State Hwy. 14 at the exit for 10th St., about 40 minutes from base housing.

Also popular are the outlet stores in Barstow, located one hour west of the base off California State Hwy. 58, and in Ontario, about one-and-a-half hours south of the base near the intersection of Interstates 10 and 15.

Large mall complexes in the Los Angeles area are one to two hours away via California State Hwy. 14.

TRANSPORTATION

Antelope Valley Airport Express

42540 6th St. E.

Lancaster, Calif., (661) 945-2529

<http://www.avairportexpress.com>

AV Airport Express offers the only airport shuttle to Los Angeles International Airport from the Antelope Valley.

Antelope Valley Transit Authority

1031 W. Ave. L-12

Lancaster, Calif., (661) 945-9445

<http://www.avta.com>

The AV Transit Authority provides local public bus transportation primarily within Palmdale and Lancaster. Commuter transit between the Antelope Valley and the Los Angeles metropolitan area is also available. Dial-a-ride service is offered for senior citizens and disabled persons.

Greyhound Bus Company

44812 N. Sierra Hwy

Lancaster, Calif., (661) 949-2827



Photo by Thomas Powell

Metro-Link

(800) 371-5465

<http://www.metrolinktrains.com>

Built in the aftermath of the 1994 Northridge earthquake, the Metro-Link stations and commuter train service provide residents with a convenient and affordable mode of travel to the Los Angeles area.

Palmdale Regional Airport

41000 20th St. E.

Palmdale, Calif., (661) 266-7600

The Palmdale Regional Airport is located in the Antelope Valley, in the northeast portion of the city of Palmdale, on a 60-acre site on U. S. Air Force Plant 42. The airport features a modern 9,000-square-foot terminal capable of handling up to 300,000 passengers annually.

The airport reopened for scheduled commercial air service in December 2004 when Scenic Airlines began nonstop service to North Las Vegas Airport. This is the first time since 1998 that the airport offered scheduled air service.



Photo by Thomas Powell